

## **Educators, As Agents of Sustainable Development in Pakistan**

Ayaz Muhammad Khan<sup>\*</sup>

Amber Jamshaid<sup>\*\*</sup>

Amna Ramzan<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

### **Abstract**

*Sustainable development (SD), a continually creating thought, with the plan to upgrade everyone's satisfaction, by accommodating economic, environmental and social development. The leading aim of the paper in hands was to evaluate the role of educators concerning Education for Sustainable Development in Pakistan and this would be an initiate of a sustainable future in the country. This study was to reconnoitre the perception of educators about their role as an sustainable development (SD) promoter at primary level and this qualitative study conducted to identify the strengths, weakness, hurdles and responsibilities of a teacher as an SD promoter. The study was qualitative in nature and to gain an in-depth insight into the phenomenon a semi-structured interview protocol was developed 30 participants were selected on the bases of seniority by convenient sampling technique. The finding shows that there was a lot of potential in the teachers which are necessary to work as an agent of sustainability, the majority of them was unaware about the term "sustainability" but teaching SD concept for a long time without knowing it, to some extent curriculum also help them. Most of the teacher in this study had different challenges and obstacles, just like lack of resources, the lake of the support system from administration and society. All the educators believed that they need to be determined and resourceful to perform their tasks as an agent for sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, Educators perception, instructional strategies, Curriculum

### **Introduction**

The theory of Sustainable Development (SD) became popularized after the publication of a report named as *Our Common Future* which was presented by the

---

\*Director Division of Education, University of Education, Lahore Pakistan, Corresponding author email: ayaz@ue.edu.pk.

\*\*PhD scholar, Division of Education, University of Education Lahore, email: amber1ali@yahoo.com.

\*\*\*PhD Scholar, University of Education, Lower Mall Campus Lahore, Pakistan, email: amnaramzan70@gmail.com.

WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development), in which Sustainable development defined as:

*Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (United Nations General Assembly, 1987, p. 43).

It has been observed a remarkable rise in social sciences research about sustainable development over the long run during the last decade. Consequently, considerable effort has been invested in the field of ESD in Pakistan (Chaudhry, 2007). It is affirmed by literature the first empirical study was done in Pakistan in 2008 (Shah, Qureshi, Bhutto, & Shah, 2011). Conversely, long before the 20th century, researchers contended that there is no need to be a trade-off among economic development and environmental sustainability. Sustainability is defined as the process of meeting the needs and challenges of the present without destroying or compromising the capacity of the future nation to fulfill their necessities and needs. It further divided into three pillars i.e. Social, Economic and Environmental and these are also denoted to as people, profit and planet respectively (UNESCO, 2002).

The Sustainable Development Goals SDGs are a widespread plan that mirrors the worldwide idea of the difficulties and openings we all in all face. The SDGs additionally call for doing improvement any other way, including through more prominent and more powerful utilization of multi-partner associations to propel the sort of comprehensive, incorporated and adaptable arrangements fit for acknowledging framework wide change. Without a doubt, normal capital stocks and biological system benefit streams support every single human movement toward accomplishing the SDGs (Kalsoom, Qureshi, & Khanam, 2018).



**Figure 1.** Dimensions of SD (Adopted)

Pakistan has listed the SDGs that enable us to link with the association of the countries ranked as upper-middle-class by 2030. Pakistan considered the first country to accept the SDGs 2030 agenda by united resolution of parliament. The Govt. piloted discussions with all stakeholders post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for organizing and solidification efforts was done at provincial and federal levels to attain Pakistan's sustainable development and poverty bargain goals. Consultation process highlighted the need for national categorization of SDGs, enhanced data gathering and implementation of monitoring mechanisms, A SDGs Monitoring and Coordination Unit, was established at federal level in coordination with UNDP, and is working to serve as a national directing entity with parallel units in the provinces (Planning Commission of Pakistan, 2019).

Sustainability inspires and inspires a strong and growing association between individual activities and environment so that Environmental, societal, and economical requirements could be fulfilled. In 1983, the Secretary-General of the United Nation assigns a task to the WCED, to "re-examine critical environmental and development problems around the world and formulate realistic proposals to address them." (WCED, 1987). This was articulated in the report named "Our Common Future" in 1987, and the main purpose was to specify the needed pathway for SD on every level and served the bring the concepts of SD into forefront on global level, that report made the world alerted about the urgency of making progress toward the truly sustainable development without harming the environment and natural resources (Brundtland, 1987). The World United Nations Environment Programme, in 1991, *Caring for the Earth* paying their attention to the practice of "living sustainably" "described as:

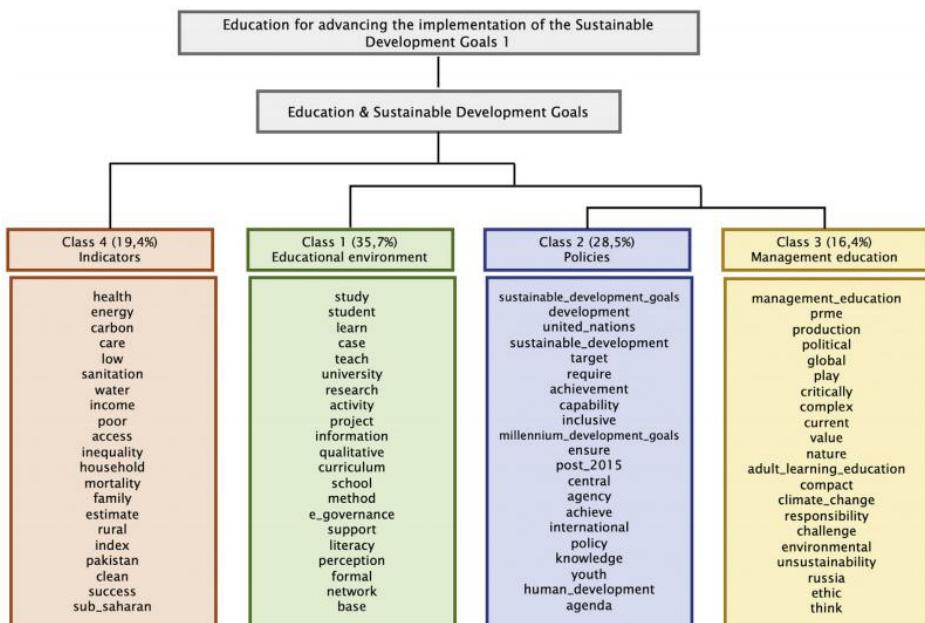
*A kind of development that provides real improvements in the quality of human life and at the same time conserves the vitality and diversity of the Earth. The goal is a development that meets these needs in a sustainable way* (Union & Unerp, 2013).

The Decade of Education for Sustainable development (ESD 2005-20014) declared by the United Nation is an attempt to reorient learning practice, policies and investments to deal with the concept of sustainability (Kopnina, 2012). During the Decade, ESD contributed to enabling the individuals to cope up with the challenges and motivate the decision-maker to make use full adjustments for the betterment of the viable world. When Education for SD emerged as a component of the learning agenda in a global arena, it was related with the considerable shift in learning discussion about purpose and aims of education and with the necessity to react on the issues caused by the modern idea of progress (Pavlova, 2013). As Huckle in 1996 discus that how ESD invites us to talk about the assumptions of educational leading discourse, especially those objectives, teaching methods and contexts which support initiating individuals

into the skills & concepts desired for identifying technological and scientific solutions to ecological issues by not including their original cause (Huckle & Wals, 2015).

### *Sustainable Development in Pakistan*

From the time of 1990's the Pakistani government has paid their additional priority objectives in promoting equitable and sustained development, especially over the last few years government plans to develop Pakistan's sustainable development strategies in their own context to manage the issue at the national level (Khan, Awan, & Khan, 2012). In 1992, it was the time when heads of different countries signed Agenda 21 on Earth summit in Rio-de-Janeiro (USA), Pakistan develops its National Conservation Strategy (NCS), which depicts as a part of SD and determine environmental improvements agenda for the country. As described by Qais (2002) who presented the Pakistani government reforms relating to environment-friendly initiatives, so as to the government of Pakistan has started National Cleaner Production Program to facilitate tanneries and industries to deal with the environmental problem (Khan, et al., 2012).



**Figure 2.** Representation of themes and lenses (Avelar, da Silva-Oliveira & da Silva Pereira, 2019).

As a component of the UN's decade for ESD individuals states like Pakistan are required to create national plans for the improvement and usage of ESD with their

instruction systems (United Nations Educational & Organization, 2002). Agenda 21 documented four areas of action for education in accomplishing sustainable development including:

- i. Develop common understanding and awareness.
- ii. Improvement in quality of education.
- iii. Reorient educational programs to address sustainability.
- iv. Provide proper training to all the sectors of society.

*Educators, as an Agent of Sustainable Development*

Being an educator is not only to perform a job that comprises a number of tasks: it means operating inside the education system, which is not entirely codified and never will be (Beccegato, 2001). Nespor (1987) argued that:

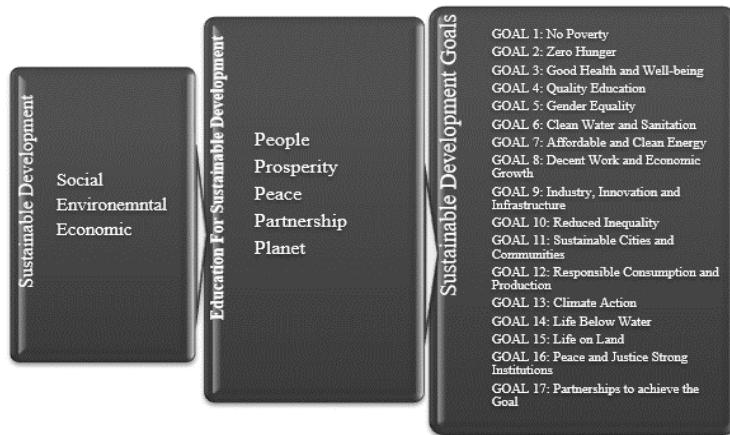
*In spite of arguments that people's "beliefs" are important influences on the ways they conceptualize tasks and learn from experience...little attention has been accorded to the structure and functions of teachers' beliefs about their roles, their students, the subject matter areas they teach, and the schools they work in* (Nespor, 1987).

This paper specifically analysis the figure of primary school teachers; those expert teachers who have the responsibility to offer sustainable patterns to their pupils, repairing teaching content for learning, arrange activities for SD concept building and also cooperating with school management to achieve the desired outcome. As per Rand and Gorden (2009), teacher-as-facilitator is critical in the teaching-learning situation and in leading an educational process which involves significant investigation and formation of common identity in sustainability. At the same time, the role of the teacher can be seen as content-neutral, not as a value impartial (Rands, 2009). In addition, national curriculum, and the educators who convey it are two principal components of effective school execution and both can be used as a solid mean toward SD promotion (Calder & Clugston, 2003). Building up the sustainable development ideas we should take help through the curriculum with some coordinated work crosswise over subjects, and developing utilization of individual, social, wellbeing training, and organizations with exterior groups, all intended to empower learner to grow extra adjusted and more full arrangements of understanding and aptitudes (Nicolaides, 2006).

*We need to make our students learn that our social, economic, educational and environmental issues are inter-connected. And also make them realize that our values, actions and personal behaviours are affecting greatly the achievement of a sustainable future. Moreover, our system is continually evolving; we need to take a social learning approach to learn from each sector of our social world. That is to say to learn the lessons from other fields and to see how we can offer a new*

*perspective to our persistent problem/issues around us. The study affirmed that the teacher training institution with highly ESD indicators ranked with high category by the accreditation council. If we are committed for sustainable development we need to train our teachers for sustainable practice, which we dream for our sustainable future. Because the teachers are nation builders and they are a change agent for a sustainable future (Khan, 2019, p.8).*

The chief target of this paper was to explore the perception of primary educators, those professional teachers who have responsibility to propose sustainable patterns to their students, structure teaching content for better learning, taking help from the implemented curriculum arrange activities for building the SD concept in learners and also cooperating with school management to achieve the desired outcomes.



**Figure 3.** Sustainable Future in Pakistan

### *The Rationale of the Study*

Pakistan has a great potential to incorporate Education for sustainable development at every level of instruction. What learners' practice after completing their studies, how well they adjust, and what decisions they will rely upon, how well SD concepts were coordinated in their educational experiences and on the open doors made accessible to them to draw in with SD, and what role teachers can play to make all these things happen. This research will provide new dimensions for further research and studies to evaluate that how well teachers can do to enable their pupils to develop and grow, mentally, physically, inwardly, socially, monetarily and environmentally, so they prosper in whatever socio-ecological settings they end up in. It will likewise enable us to see how teachers extend this learning outside the schoolrooms, so knowledge inside ESD does not persist only personal, but rather prompts dynamic investment in looking

for and actualizing new and positive examples of social association and change, in accordance with the idea of Sustainable Development

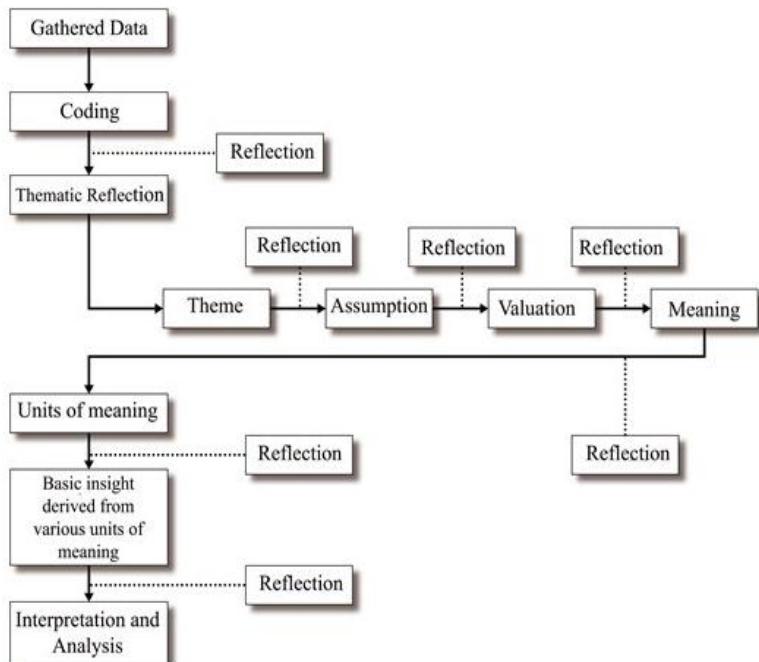
#### *Objectives of the Study*

Teachers play a very vital role in the progress and development of a learner from an initial age, hence it is significant to identify what they know, understand and believe about education for sustainable development. This study aims to measure and analyze the teacher's role in Sustainable development thus the main objectives of this paper are to explore:

1. Their perceptions, understanding and awareness of Sustainable development.
2. Styles and skill utilized by teachers to support SD concepts which are presented in the implemented curriculum.
3. What challenges teachers have to face while working as an agent for SD.

#### **Method**

As stated earlier the present study is as exhaustive and constantly developing as the phenomenon under investigation. The paradigm of this study was interpretive; purely qualitative phenomenological research design was used to gain a deeper vision into the phenomenon. For data collection, a semi-structured interview protocol was used.



**Figure 4.** Data collection and design

### *Participants of the Study*

The primary school educators in district Lahore were the target population. There were 2817 primary educators from the public sector and 1275 teachers from private sectors. The assessable population was 4092 primary school educators of district Lahore. Thirty-two teachers were chosen as a sample and interviewed for this study. Teachers were selected through the convenient sampling technique on the bases of seniority.

### *Instrument*

A semi-structured interview protocol was created for primary educators of Lahore to investigate their understanding, willingness, aptitudes and styles, issues they had been facing and their recommendation for improvement of SD execution. The interview protocol contains basic demographic questions alongside a group of open-ended questions investigating the educator's attitude, understanding, their perceived knowledge about sustainable development concepts and issues, their perception about the usefulness of recent curriculum to promote SD or they were using some sort of hidden curriculum to achieve their target.

### *Data Analysis*

The process of analyzing data enables me to understand the collected information. As per (Hatch, 2002) analyzing means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories (Hatch, 2002). After transcribing the interviews researcher went through them and categorize all the participant responses according to the theme.

### **Findings**

The educator's replies were coded and categories and in results formed as five themes. These were:

#### *Theme 1: Understanding*

Majority of teachers indicates through their answers that they have an idea about concepts of SD and they have been practising these concepts into there own lives, 57% of educators believe that:

*SD is essentially about relationships-relationships between people and their environment. The human element is now widely recognized as the key variable in SD, both in terms of reasons for unsustainable development and in terms of the hopes for SD.*

As per one participant, "education enables us to understand ourselves and others and our links with the wider natural and social environment, and this understanding serves as a durable basis for building respect. Along with a sense of

justice, responsibility, exploration and dialogue, ESD aims to move us to adopt behaviours and practices which enable all to live a full life without being deprived of basics". But some of the teachers were unaware of the term sustainable development but have an understanding and teaching of the concepts adequately.

***Theme 2: Motivations***

As indicated by most educators their love for nature, world and humanity motivate them not only to practice the concepts of SD but also teaches this concept to their students so that they would be able to live a sustained life, According to most of the teachers. Majority of educators believe that education was about influences and connection, connections among people, content, the Earth and the God. They accredited their own interest for SD to their opinion that people were made to be in these contacts. Educators frequently have their own theories about training, including ecological instruction. As another motivation for ESD was referred to by a participant that he was inspired by his trust and to the spiritual connection he assumes and felt with the Earth. Teachers go about as the two subjects and as an agent of change as they make choices that reflect their comprehension of the conceptual and practical ramifications of their training.

***Theme 3: Teacher`s skills and styles and student involvement***

Most of the teachers strongly believe that learning is based on experience and they attempt to involve their students into the particle situations as much as possible throughout the instruction. One of the participants from the private sector believed that educators need to "get to the heart of a kid" if they want to change and inspire the student`s life. That was the centre of his faith in student involvement. Similarly, the public sector teachers tell the researcher that they encouraged their students to actively participate in the activity-based learning just like in specific day's projects at school just like recycling campaign, planting day's promotion of ethical values Day etc. Almost All the teacher from both sectors were willing to create memories for their learners, and want them to be able to positively contribute to their society. Majority of educators trust that learning could be long-lasting if made through different experiments and activities, for accomplish their desired SD outcome they consider field trips, group activities, the arrangement of sports day and other annual functions very useful for successful incorporation of SD concepts

***Theme 4: SD related content in the implemented curriculum***

Majority of educators specified that the content of the curriculum about sustainable development should centre around providing an idea about general natural issues. They referred to such issues as: 'things like a waste of resources, pollution, recycling things, ethical values, other species on earth etc. Educators examined the idea that ESD fused educating and finding out about 'both local and far off conditions' some of them considered that the curriculum content about sustainability ought to be tied in

with 'building up and develop a positive state of mind towards nature. Educators put some light on such issues as How we care for our things in school, we have a lake and the creature that lives in the lake, what they require, that our survival frequently relies upon their survival. In regard to the advancement of SD ideas inside the national curriculum, Educators viewed the place of ESD as something effectively natural in their practices and as an essential element which described great schools and great educators. Despite the fact that SD isn't set up as a different subject in the national educational modules, Mostly educators believe that sustainability ideas must not be presented as isolated curricular elements; rather it should be invaded to all zones of the educational program.

***Theme 5: Acceptance and Challenges***

Majority of participants stated a common difficulty in coaching about sustainability, which is a student's social, physical economical family background. Some of the pupils' projects need support or input from learner's family. For example, there are some specific days arranged by the school organization to clarify different concepts like plant a tree day, recycling day, charity day etc. In order to attain their goals, teachers need a student's family support and cooperation.

*A few members required funding and care from their school division and society protection in mind the end goal to efficiently complete the incorporation of SD concepts. None of these educators was working in all-out separation. Every one of the required collaboration with other staff people, organization and society. While the greater part of the Educator was extremely eager to promote SD ideas, but there were some who were uncertain to roll out progress in what they were undertaking. There were some problems to confront when starting another package or endeavoring something new. Not all people are alright with change and some realize adapting to change extremely worrying. The educators in my research had the normal hindrances and problems like lack of support system, unavailability of resources etc. They all said that educators should have been clever with a specific end goal to get what they required keeping in awareness the end goal to carry out their jobs as an agent of SD.*

***Theme 6: Educator's Suggestions***

A larger number of educators trusts that the consistently advancing, mind-bending and expansive impression of education for sustainable development can turn into certainty if have:

*More educators, who can perceive beyond, think beyond and act beyond. Educators who are not negligible ministers but rather supporters and advocates of ESD, who have practicing ESD into their everyday lives, which is mirrored in their teaching style. They can begin the context of transformative exercise—a training which envelops every one of the phases and teaches of a lifetime and realizes a principal variation in the way we figure, performance and reply to the diverse socio-social, economic and ecological problems around us. The human factor is presently broadly supposed as the important variable in sustainable development, both as far as explanations behind untenable development and as far as the desires for sustainable development. To reply to this demand, what we need today is a compact and submitted power of complicated inspirations cum teacher (not mere educators), full of energy, vitality, ingenuity, certainty and steadiness who can think essentially and empathetically.*

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

These findings give a sign of the scope of educator's understandings, mindfulness and awareness about sustainability despite the lack of formal training in this era. They give proof to the requirement for including SD values into teacher training programs and a beginning stage for outlining such courses that would improve educators' understandings and aid supportability training programs. The instruments could then be incorporated into such courses to help with checking the improvement of comprehension. Discoveries and tools could likewise illuminate the arranging of rehearsing educator professional development. In this way a more prominent number of educators could then execute SD training programs in their schools, bringing about a bigger number of learners taking part in education for sustainable development.

*There is an alarming and growing appreciation of the standing value of academic and professional research on ESD in Pakistan uninterrupted is being censored by the Universities and Higher Education Commission gradually. However, the concentration in this arena and these imposts have remained mostly restricted to the dimensions of quantity, totally overlooking the quality dimension. Specifically, in this context the unique effort to evaluate the quality and worth of social science research in Pakistan in objective and quantifiable terms. A clear-cut and applicable index of social sciences in Pakistan should be developed, apprehending multiple dimensions which are predominantly significant in the Pakistani Social science perspective. The index is a shared extent of Journals index and articles index, premised on the users' perspective and the producers'*

*perspective on quality. The results of the study show that Pakistani social science research underwrites more to public debates and policy inventions than to pushing the edges of knowledge and knowledge-based economy for further research and sustainable future* (Khan, 2019, p.12).

This base up approach could then influence decision makers to roll out improvement. Since there is a need to outline and embrace sustainable development arrangements which must fulfil the national and universal implications. I contended that these issues appear to come from a lacking and summed up presentation and introduction of SD ideas, instruction for economic improvement, and so forth in the national educational programs and from the restricted learning and information educators appear to have regarding their practices and their comprehension of how development can acquire congruity with what they are already doing. This paper would distinguish that how an educator can emphatically incorporate the ideas of sustainable development into the pupil's mind at primary level, and how they utilize their abilities and skills to work as an agent of SD. Based on contemplate result it is prescribed that:

1. Proper training programs should be offered in teacher training institutions which emphasize more on developing manpower to promote Sustainable development.
2. This investigation might be led at various levels and grade-wise in different sectors
3. It might be conducted subject-wise to investigate the phenomenon.
4. This study is about the educator's part it might be head-educators and students point of view in future research.

## **References**

- Avelar, A. B. A., da Silva-Oliveira, K. D., & da Silva Pereira, R. (2019). Education for advancing the implementation of the sustainable development goals: A systematic approach. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 17(3), 100322.
- Beccegato, L. S. (2001). *Pedagogia sociale: riferimenti di base*: La scuola. Retrieved from <https://www.docsity.com/it/pedagogia-sociale-santelli-beccegato-luisa/596631/>.
- Brundtland, G. (1987). Our common future: Report of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development. *United Nations, Oslo*, 1-59.
- Calder, W., & Clugston, R. M. (2003). International efforts to promote higher education for sustainable development. *Planning for Higher Education*, 31(3), 30-44.

- Chaudhry, I. S. (2007). Gender inequality in education and economic growth: Case study of Pakistan. *Pakistan Horizon*, 60(4), 81-91.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. New York: Suny Press.
- Huckle, J., & Wals, A. E. (2015). The UN decade of education for sustainable development: business as usual in the end. *Environmental Education Research*, 21(3), 491-505.
- Kalsoom, Q., Qureshi, N., & Khanam, A. (2018). Perceptions of the Research Scholars Regarding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in *Pakistan Sustainable Development Research in the Asia-Pacific Region* (pp. 165-179): Springer.
- Khan, A.M. (2019). ESD An Alarming Encounter for Sustainable Future in Pakistan; Working Paper published at Global Conference on ESD in Japan. Okayama University.
- Khan, S. J. I., Awan, A., & Khan, M. M. (2013). The concept of sustainable development in Pakistan. *Basic Research Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 2, 12-21.
- Kopnina, H. (2012). Education for sustainable development (ESD): the turn away from 'environment' in environmental education? *Environmental Education Research*, 18(5), 699-717.
- Nespor, J. (1987). The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 19(4), 317-328.
- Nicolaides, A. (2006). The implementation of environmental management towards sustainable universities and education for sustainable development as an ethical imperative. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 7(4), 414-424.
- Pavlova, M. (2013). Teaching and learning for sustainable development: ESD research in technology education. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 23(3), 733-748.
- Planning Commission of Pakistan. (2019). Government of Pakistan; Ministry of Planning Development & Reforms: Retrieved from; <https://www.pc.gov.pk/web/sdg/sdgpak>
- Rands, G. P. (2009). A Principle-Attribute Matrix for Environmentally Sustainable Management Education and Its Application The Case for Change-Oriented Service-Learning Projects. *Journal of Management Education*, 33(3), 296-322.

- Shah, A. A., Qureshi, S., Bhutto, A., & Shah, A. (2011). Sustainable development through renewable energy-the fundamental policy dilemmas of Pakistan. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 15(1), 861-865.
- UNESCO. (2002). Education for sustainability from Rio to Johannesburg: Lessons learnt from a decade of Commitment. UNESCO Paris.
- Union, T. W. C., & UNEP. (2013). *Caring for the earth: a strategy for sustainable living*. New York: Routledge Publications.
- United Nations Educational, S., & Organization, C. (2002). Education for Sustainability: From Rio to Johannesburg: Lessons Learnt from a Decade of Commitment: Unesco Paris, France.
- WCED, U. (1987). *Our common future*. World Commission on Environment and Development Oxford University Pres.